Civil Suits.

49. The appeal to the High Court by the Isáfatdár of A'mgaon, referred to in para. 68 of last year's report, was decided in favour of Government, though not for the full amount claimed, as large deductions were allowed to the Isáfatdár as working expenses and cost of protection.

Criminal Cases.

50. A (substitute) forest guard was convicted with striking a forest offender, who ran away, on the back of the head and causing his death. He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for five years.

51. A round guard in Surat division was found guilty of fraud in connection with a free grant of wood, but was acquitted on appeal to the Session Judge. He was, however, dismissed after departmental enquiry.

52. The Forest guards Gorav Bhika and Dewra Sukaria of the Dángs establishment were convicted by the Assistant Political Agent, Khándesh, of taking bribes. They were dismissed and declared ineligible for re-employment under Government in any capacity.

(*c*).--IMPROVEMENT OF FOREST GROWTH.

Natural Reproduction.

53. Natural reproduction is reported by all Divisional Forest Officers as having been fair during the year, but this must be merely taken to mean that it was up to the average and was not interfered with by scanty rainfall, &c. From observations recorded by almost all Divisional Forest Officers, and from my personal observations, I can record that natural reproduction is nothing like what it should be owing to the annual fires. In the Panch Maháls the seed reproduction of teak is normally magnificent. I have never seen anything like it even in Kánara, but the young seedlings are scorched year after year and either killed outright or where they escape are hopelessly ruined. I have seen as many as 3 dead sticks standing up from one stool representing three consecutive annual efforts of the stool to become a tree. In the Dángs Mr. Wallinger reports that seedlings are totally wanting, and from the record of these forests this could only be expected, and Mándvi, as I can testify, is nearly as bad. In both the Thána divisions the coppice reproduction in the coupes is very generally satisfactory, but as I have recorded elsewhere there are but few, if any, seedlings coming on to replace the stools when their vitality shall be exhausted, and again the principal, if not only, cause is fire. Immediately after the rains the coupes are carpeted with seedlings, but all but a very small—an ominously small—proportion are destroyed by fire before April.

(*2*).—*Artificial Reproduction.*

54. Artificial reproduction, so far as regular plantations go, have little place in the Forestry of the Northern Circle.

55. In the Thána divisions an attempt was made to assist nature in the coupes by broad-casting and filling in blanks, but the conditions which handicap natural reproduction are still more fatal to these cultural operations.

56. In Surat, Tithál plantation has given fair results and the experiment of planting out Casuarina, from a nursery, on the sea-shore above high water mark is being continued. The Vejalpor nursery was kept up and supplied a large number of transplants of Casuarina and of teak, which latter were planted out in the coupes with fair success, and other small nurseries were started at Wághai, Mándvi, Delwáda and Gandeva.

57. In the Panch Maháls some 125 acres in several places were ploughed and sown with bíbhut. It is too early to brand these attempts as failures, but as usual with these plantations made in the open the seedlings disappeared in the hot weather. An old plantation at Wávdi although wire-fenced and fire-traced was burnt over.

(3).—*Early Thinnings.*

58. No such operations were carried out in this Circle.